

Current Projects - Rivers and Streams

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Mississippi River Northern Pike Investigations

Northern pike provide an important recreational fishery for Upper Mississippi River (UMR) anglers. Angler expectations from UMR fisheries vary greatly because anglers target this species for a variety of reasons. Some anglers target pike due to their trophy potential, while others are more consumption oriented. For many anglers, northern pike are a non-target species that they appreciate for the uniqueness that they offer to their angling experience. In order to effectively manage this fishery for this diverse angling group, this study was initiated in 2010 to provide information on northern pike population dynamics, angler opinions, and habitat availability in the UMR.

A total of 631 northern pike were sampled with fyke nets from Pools 10 and 13 in the spring of 2012. In Pool 10, 269 northern pike were collected in 37 net nights (CPUE = 7.29 fish/24 hr set) and in Pool 13, 357 northern pike were collected in 66 net nights (CPUE = 5.41 fish/24 hr set). Pectoral fin rays from six fish per inch group were removed for age and growth determination. All northern pike over 12 inches were tagged with an individually numbered floy tag, color coded to it's pool of capture. Additionally, radio transmitters were surgically implanted into 40 northern pike in October 2012: 20 in Crooked Slough (Pool 13), 10 in South Sabula Lake (Pool 13), and 10 at Bussey Lake (Pool 10). These fish, and 20 radio tagged at Sny Magil Bottoms (Pool 10) in 2011, will be tracked for the next several years to determine seasonal movements and habitat selection of northern pike in the UMR.

